



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 9, 2012

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**MAYOR EMANUEL JOINS POLICE AND FIRE OFFICIALS TO PRESENT THE ANNUAL LAMBERT TREE AND CARTER HARRISON AWARDS**

*Recognizes Police and Fire Officials for their sacrifice and service to protect Chicago's Communities*

Today, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy and Fire Commissioner Jose Santiago honored the exemplary service of Chicago Police Department and Chicago Fire Department personnel at the Lambert Tree and Carter Harrison Awards ceremony in City Hall.

"This is a solemn moment for the city, where we honor Chicago's finest for heroism in their service to the city," said Mayor Emanuel. "Police officers and firefighters play a critical role in making Chicago a place where people want to live, work and raise a family. Today's recipients have gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect Chicago's neighborhoods and communities."

The Lambert Tree and Carter Harrison Awards are the Police and Fire Departments highest honor. The awards date to 1885 when Judge Lambert Tree donated \$700 to the City of Chicago for a gold medal to be presented to a heroic firefighter. Mayor Carter Harrison responded by matching the request so that a police officer could be honored as well.

**About the recipients**

**2012 Lambert Tree Award - Police Officer Joseph Lopez**

Officer Joseph Lopez, an 8 year veteran assigned to the 16<sup>th</sup> district, responded to a call of shots fired and upon arrival, a witness related that the offender he observed shooting had fled in an SUV. Officer Lopez located the parked vehicle several minutes later and as he approached the vehicle, the rear passenger door opened and a male subject fled on foot. Officer Lopez pursued the subject to a residential parking lot, where the offender turned toward Officer Lopez and pointed a semi-automatic handgun directly at him. The offender then fired three times at Officer Lopez, who fearing for his life aimed his weapon at the offender. Officer Lopez displayed remarkable restraint by not returning fire because of a concern that additional gunfire would endanger citizens walking

near the armed offender. The foot pursuit continued to the rear gangway and up the stairs. Officer Lopez continued behind him up the stairs. The offender realizing he had nowhere to run began walking down the stairs. Officer Lopez suddenly came face-to-face with the offender. The offender then pointed the handgun at the officer. Fearing for his life, the officer discharged his duty weapon one time, fatally striking the offender. The offender's weapon, a loaded 9mm semi-automatic handgun, fell to the ground but was recovered immediately. Officer Joseph Lopez demonstrated outstanding bravery and an act of selflessness by relentlessly pursuing an armed and extremely dangerous offender.

### **2012 Cater Harrison Award – Firefighter Larrence McCormack**

On August 25<sup>th</sup> 2011, Firefighter Larrence McCormack, assigned to Truck 20 responded to a fire at 70<sup>th</sup> and Justine, in the Englewood neighborhood. While conducting searches for victims in an attic, an explosive increase in fire caused fellow Firefighter Carter to become lost in the smoke and flames. Firefighter McCormack had escaped the flames but upon hearing that Firefighter Carter was missing, ran back into the heat and smoke and searched until he found Carter, and then single handedly brought him out to the stairwell where others assisted in getting him out. The next morning while still working the 24 hour shift Larrence McCormack was at another fire at 62<sup>nd</sup> and Whipple where he went into a burning basement without water protection, found an amputee who was unresponsive and fading from the effects of an arson fire and picked him up, carrying him in the black smoke and searing heat upstairs to a waiting ambulance crew. Firefighter Larrence McCormack in the course of one 24 hours shift, not only saved a fellow firefighter from certain death, but in a separate event, brought out a disabled civilian who was the victim of an arson attack. Firefighter McCormack acted in the highest traditions of the Chicago Fire Department and is awarded the Carter Harrison Award.

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**Photo Caption:** Mayor Emanuel thanks CPD and CFD officers for their exemplary service.

**Photo Credit:** Brooke Collins, City of Chicago